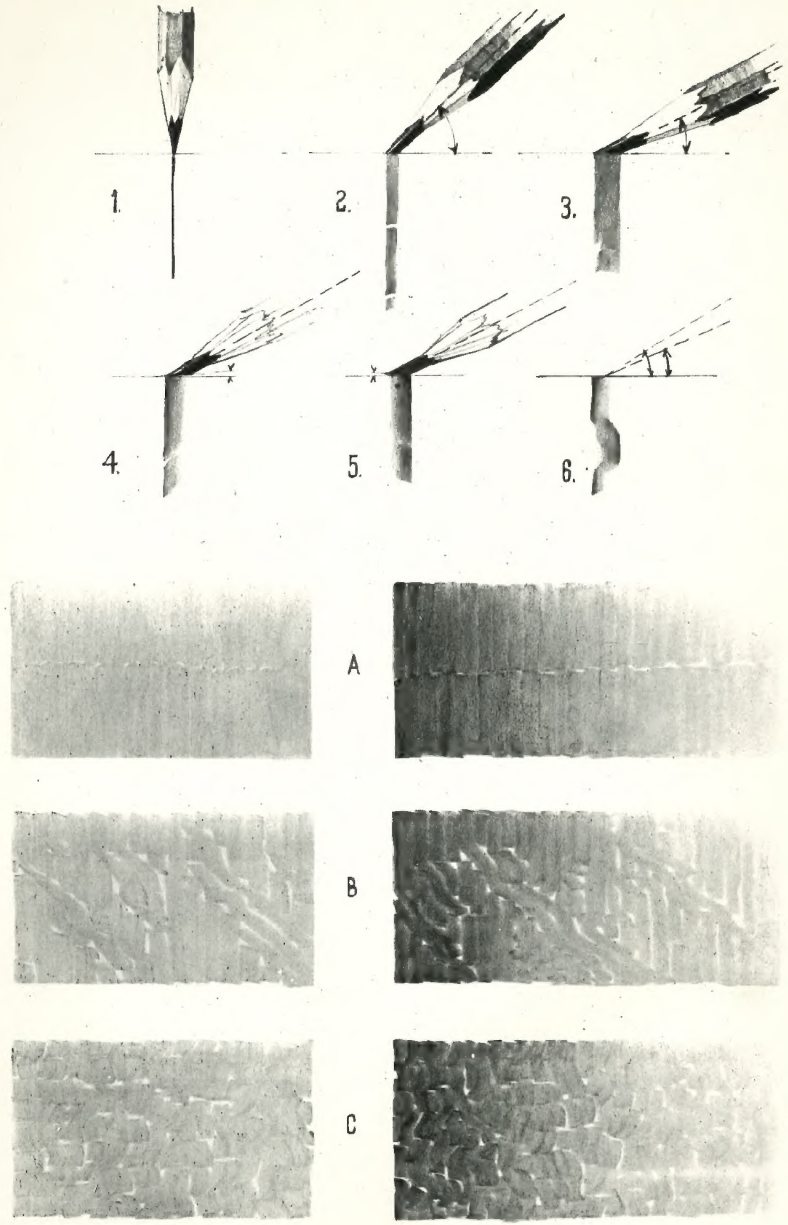


LESSON 1—FUNDAMENTAL PENCIL STROKE EXERCISES

LESSON 1—FUNDAMENTAL STROKES

In preparing the series of lessons in pencil drawing that begins here, there is no wish to add unnecessarily to the already substantial list of excellent general books on this subject now available. It is my purpose to discuss only one particular technique — a technique that so far as I know has not been completely explored elsewhere. For want of a better name, it may be called "broad stroke pencil drawing." Used with intelligence and artistic sense it is capable of yielding crisp, sparkling, and powerfully expressive results.

Proficiency with this technique may be reached in proportion to the degree of control that is acquired over a few simple but fundamental strokes that will be described hereafter. These can be mastered by anyone who is willing to practice them diligently. For complete success they *must* be mastered; so don't be tempted to regard them as too elementary for you.

For practice you will need paper, pencils, and means to keep the latter properly sharp. As you develop skill you will develop preferences as to materials, but at this stage it will be well to select kid-finish Bristol or some paper of similar surface and a good quality drawing pencil of 2B grade. For deeper blacks you may sometimes need a 4B but no others are really necessary. A sharp knife and a sandpaper block will complete your equipment. The sandpaper block is just as important as the pencil. Don't forget it.

After the wood of the pencil has been whittled away to expose about a quarter of an inch of cylindrical lead, the lead is rubbed at an angle on the sandpaper to produce a flat wedge point as at 2. or 3. of the accompanying plate. The broad strokes are to be made with the flat side of this wedge held evenly against the paper. The width of strokes will depend on the angle at which the point is sharpened. Note that the surface of the lead held against the paper will be oval-shaped, since it is a section cut by a plane intersecting a cylinder. This oval shape allows more flexibility in producing different types of stroke than could be had with a square lead.

Now with this flat surface of the pencil point held full against the paper, a stroke can be drawn which begins and ends cleanly, is of uniform width, and has the same value throughout. If the pencil is slightly tilted, however, toward its point, as at 4., or away from it, as at 5., the same pressure will yield a stroke accented and sharp along one edge and fading out along the other. By rocking the pencil, alternately back and forth during the stroke, the result shown at 6. is secured. Thin lines for outline or accents (similar to those made by a conical point, as at 1.) may be produced by holding the wedge pointed pencil upright.

The broad strokes, incidentally, should all be made at the same steady speed, not too fast nor yet too slow. They should also be made by moving the arm rather than the fingers.

Rolling the pencil very slightly, either away from or towards you, and holding it that way during a stroke, will reduce the area of lead in contact with the paper and so with the same pressure will yield a stroke of darker value.

After you have practiced these single strokes of various types for a while, try to combine them to produce flat and graded wash effects as at A. In these, the strokes are laid side by side, touching each other but not overlapping, so that individual strokes merge with their neighbors. Try to keep the beginning and end of each stroke clean and square with the rest so that when you are done the area you have covered will be definitely rectangular. You will learn to slide the pencil very slightly across the stroke at its beginning and end to get this clean termination without increasing the pressure.

Sometimes in covering an area it is desirable to break the monotony of parallel strokes by introducing some diagonal strokes which may be thought of as following the direction of light. Practice this as shown at B. in both flat and graded wash effects.

The third exercise in covering areas should be done with a large number of short strokes curving in different directions and combining, as at C., to give either flat or graded values. Acquire all the skill you can at doing these "simple" exercises so that you will be ready in the next lesson to tackle the indication of stonework.

LESSON 2—INDICATING STONEWORK

Having practiced diligently (I hope) the fundamental strokes described in the first lesson, and possessing as a result a reasonable degree of control over the pencil, you are ready to start on the indication of various textures. This lesson has to do with stonework.

While it is possible for you to begin right here, using as reference the examples shown opposite , it would be a wise thing to wait, before you draw, long enough to go outdoors and look at some actual stone walls. There are many things about them that you can observe with profit. Notice the variations in size and color and value of the individual stones in a section of rubble or random ashlar. See how a good mason composes them to achieve variety and texture and how he avoids monotony. See how the light falls differently upon each one and how the shadows and highlights arrange themselves in accordance with the roughness or smoothness of the work. Take note of the effect of reflected light from nearby surfaces or from the ground. The more closely you observe these things, the better able will you be to draw a convincing picture. Even if you are already familiar with stonework, you can always benefit by looking again.

Now come back to your drawing board and see that your sandpaper block is at hand and your pencil is sharpened properly. You are going to try to do what the good mason does — only you will do it on paper.

First you will have to sketch very lightly the pattern of the wall. As you do this, keep in mind the desirability of laying the stones horizontal, mixing the sizes to make a pleasant variety, breaking the joints to get a good bond. Bigger stones are good at corners to give them strength; smaller stones fill in among the irregular spaces between the big ones. If you are drawing a rough wall, avoid the monotony of pattern that would be caused by repeating stones of the same size or shape at regular intervals.

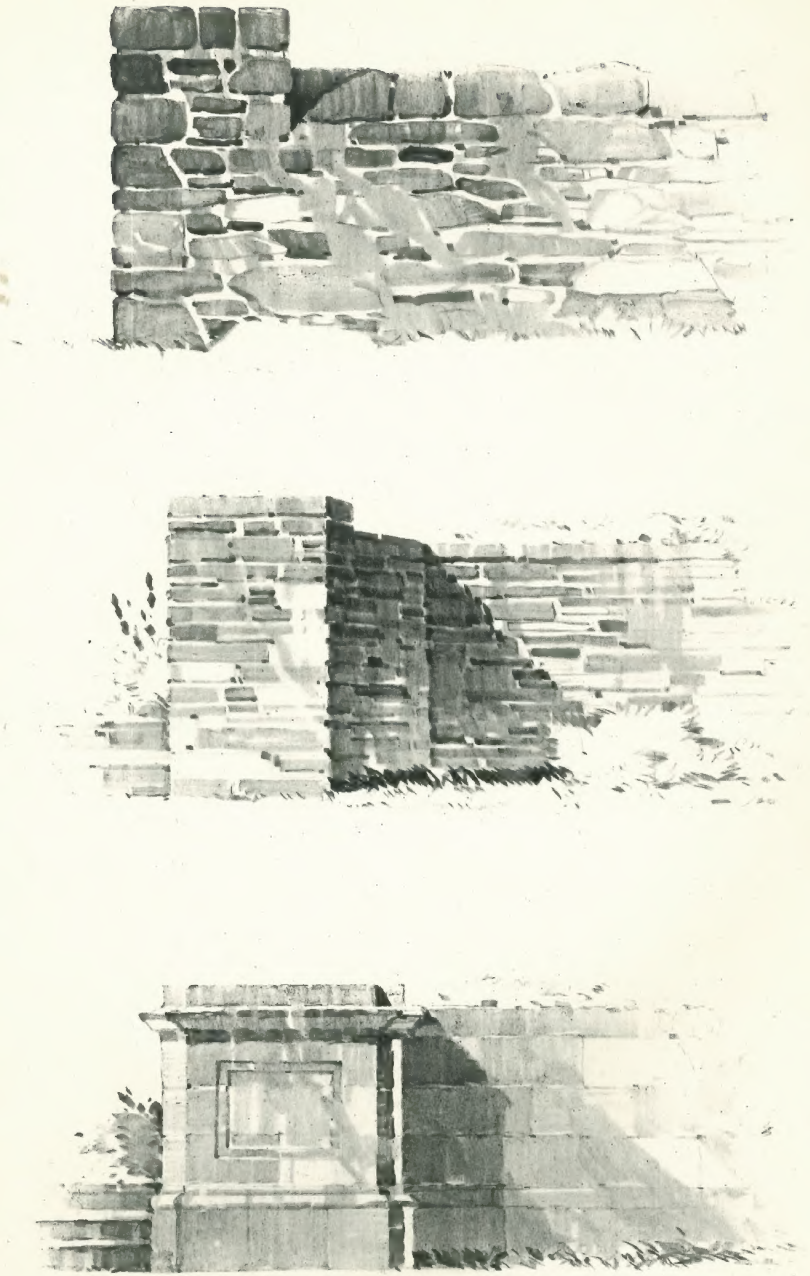
Decide where you want to focus the attention by giving your wall the greatest contrast with its surroundings. Begin there to put in the darkest values, shading individual stones cleanly with parallel strokes of the required weight. Do some stones with vertical strokes; a few with horizontal for variety's sake. C- vice-versa. Occasionally, as you proceed fro.. dark toward light, break the pattern with some diagonal strokes as you did in the last lesson at "B." Keep the edges of stones clean-cut by accenting the beginning and end of strokes slightly as already described. This applies particularly to the edges that silhouette against the sky or lighter areas.

Put in a few shadows along the bottom edges of occasional stones, watching the whole effect all the while to avoid spottiness. Leave clean white areas between stones to count partly as mortar joints, partly as highlights along top edges, but avoid monotony in this also by letting some strokes pass through from stone to stone.

By working from dark toward light, you can keep the entire area under better control and you will learn with experience that there comes a point where it is well to stop with some of the stones left white. The white areas give sparkle to the final result and are in accord with nature, where sunlight is almost totally reflected from surfaces upon which it falls at just the proper angle. Even in shadows it is well to leave a little white paper to show through here and there to express reflected light and break up otherwise uninteresting areas.

The same general method is applicable to any type of stonework. As the wall becomes smoother, individual stones are drawn with less gradation and the shadows under them become less pronounced. The same is true of the highlights. There is still, however, gradation from dark to light in the whole picture and individual stones are not all in the same value. The diagonal strokes are still used to give variety and to suggest the direction of falling light. Stiffness can be avoided without interfering with the general effect of accurate jointing and dressing, as may be seen in the example at the bottom of the accompanying sheet.

Three types of stonework only are shown. In them, nevertheless, you can find the principles by which to indicate any of the many varieties of texture you will see in buildings, stone fences, etc., as you travel about. Try many of them.



LESSON 2—INDICATING ROUGH AND SMOOTH STONEWORK

LESSON 3—INDICATING BRICKWORK

This lesson turns to the problem of indicating brickwork at both small and large scale. The illustrations show two examples which in scale are approximately what you might encounter in an architectural perspective rendering, but the principles back of their execution extend to cover any reasonable scale.

The same suggestion I previously made with regard to stone textures applies to brickwork. That is, you can to advantage go out before you begin to draw and look closely at a number of brick walls, making a mental note of the things that give them their character both when seen at a little distance and near at hand. Differences in color of individual bricks, shadows in the mortar joints, the type of bond, and the thickness of joints become of more importance as the scale increases. At the smaller scale, these things cannot be shown in detail but it is important to know that they exist if you want to be intelligent about suggesting them with your pencil.

At the smaller scale, one of the important things to look out for is the perspective direction of the brick courses. The example shown is seen almost in direct elevation and there was not much chance of going astray. When the surface of the wall is viewed at more of an angle, however, watch carefully to keep the direction of courses correct as you work down the wall.

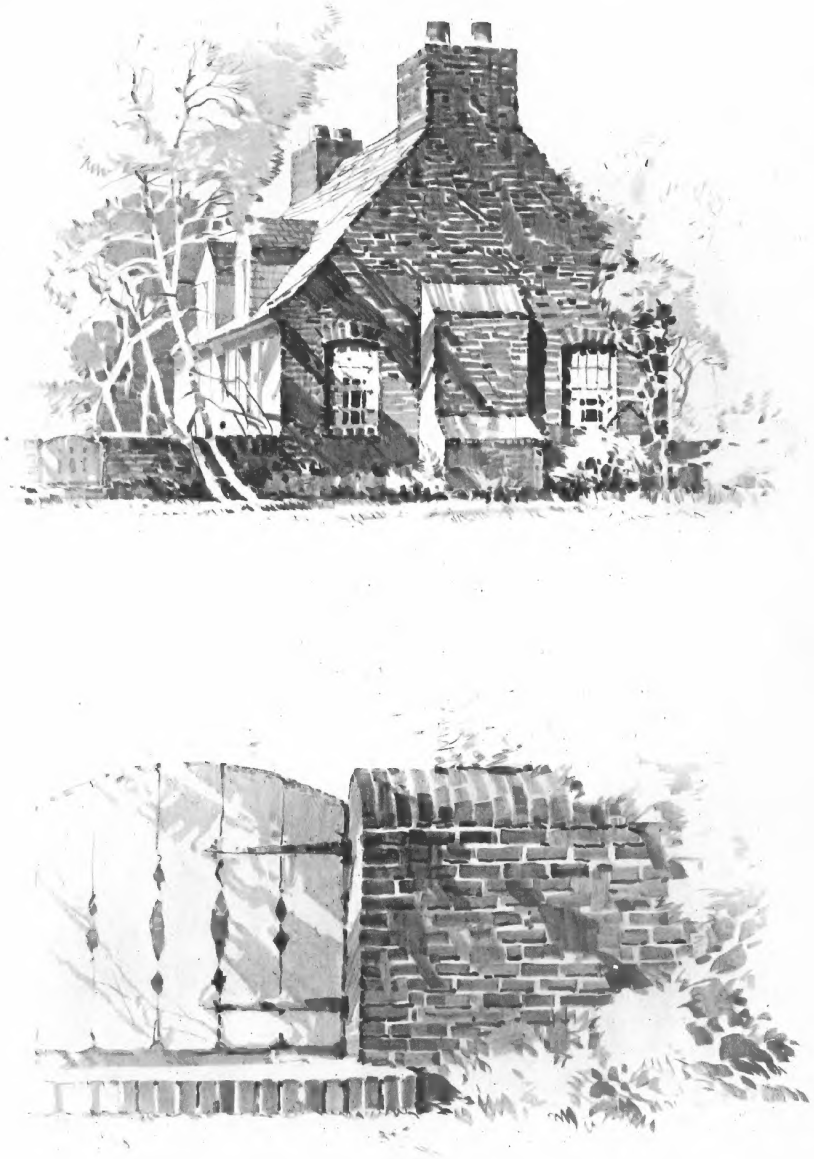
Assuming that you have now laid out your drawing lightly, we will start to render it. Decide in your mind, if possible, how you are going to dispose your values to get an interesting composition with dark against light and light against dark and a sparkling play of sunshine and shadow. Begin to put in the darkest values. For the shadows, use broad diagonal strokes, making them not too dense and allowing occasional spots of white to break up any monotonous areas.

Now begin at the top of the brick surface to render the brick itself. In doing this, avoid monotony by varying the length of strokes from course to course. Do not indicate each separate brick but occasionally use a short stroke among the longer ones. Break the horizontal strokes by introducing diagonal lines once in a while and sometimes cover an irregular area with a series of short diagonals, keeping the value the same as adjacent brick courses. The wall in general should grade from dark at the top to light at the bottom. As you work down, you can leave more whites to show through between courses, but everywhere avoid monotony or regularity. To suggest weathering, use some vertical shading, particularly near the top where it would occur in nature. These vertical strokes can be put in either as you render or later, on top of earlier strokes. You can also put in some dark bricks here and there, but don't overdo it.

When you finish, if you are successful, you will have indicated a brick surface that has a convincing texture, that is full of interest, that provides contrasts where you want them, and that suggests shadows falling from nearby trees.

Turning to larger scale, the things you have now learned can be applied with more exactitude, but no less freedom. In the piece of wall shown at the bottom of the accompanying plate, the individual bricks show up more clearly but the surface is well broken up with diagonal strokes and areas shaded to the appropriate values. Here, the individual bricks appear as single strokes made with a properly sharpened pencil. They vary in value as the bricks themselves vary in color. Shadows have been indicated sharply under some of them and the mortar joints are left white in many places, taking care however to distribute the sparkling whites irregularly. If you practice copying this drawing and then apply what you learn to examples of your own invention you will acquire freedom and command as you go along.

If you do not succeed in producing a satisfactory result, it may be that you need to refer back to Lesson 1 and do some more practice of individual strokes. It may be because you are not keeping your pencil properly sharpened. Or it may be that you are not keeping in mind at all times that monotony must be avoided through variety of strokes, contrasting values, and opposition of forms. Only by exercising constant control over your whole composition, seeing it broadly while you are drawing in detail, can you produce a completely artistic result. But keep on trying.



LESSON 3—INDICATING BRICK AT LARGE AND SMALL SCALE

LESSON 7—DRAWING THE BIRCH TREE

Just as the oak is strong, rugged, and masculine, the birch, which we will now study, is delicate, graceful, and feminine in its characteristics. I am, of course, thinking of the ordinary white birch seen so frequently in suburban landscapes rather than of the great canoe birch which is found in the virgin forest rising to considerable heights and sometimes having impressive girth. The type of birch I mean grows commonly in clusters — several stems from a single root system. So I have chosen to illustrate a cluster of three in which the trunks, as often occurs, have departed from the straight line of uneventful growth and have acquired that character which comes from a certain amount of struggle for survival in the face of difficulties. Because they have this character they become more interesting to draw and compose more effectively.

We begin, as usual, by blocking out the general forms and masses to establish the proportions of the principal foliage groups and their relation to the slender stems. Two stages of this blocking out process are suggested lightly at the top of the accompanying plate. In the first step, the trees alone are roughly arranged in a group. Carried a little further, the composition is seen to need the addition of a mass of shrubbery behind it to avoid top-heaviness and the foliage of the trees needs to be elaborated a bit and treated in a manner more suggestive of leafiness.

When we have gone this far and have our intentions well in mind we can begin boldly to lay in the values we have decided upon for our composition. The central tree of the group, which is in back of the other two, we determine to make the darkest so as to hold the picture in balance. This decision also enables us to silhouette the trees in front as light against dark, increasing the three dimensional feeling.

Note that the foliage of the birch is thin and tremulous, with lots of openings through which the sky shines and lots of leaves, stirred by the wind, turning their silvery under surfaces to the observer. Many single leaves stand out from the rest, especially around the edges of foliage masses, contributing to the sparkling effect. It should be your aim to express these peculiarities in your sketch. You can do it by using rather short broad strokes, changing their directions all the time and varying their shapes to simulate leaf forms, not too literally but suggestively. Also leave frequent whites.

As with the other trees, the principle of setting light against dark and dark against light is employed to define shapes of stem and branch and leaf mass. This principle holds good even though the bark of the birch trunks and limbs is predominantly white. They will still seem dark against the sky in many places. Where the trunks are silhouetted white against the dark foliage of the shrubbery there will be enough lightness to carry the impression of the light bark throughout the sketch.

In putting tones on the trunks and larger branches it will be well to use short strokes running crosswise rather than longer strokes running lengthwise. Somehow this treatment expresses better the quality of the bark, which has a horizontal grain as is known to every one who has peeled a birch tree. Occasional breaks in the continuity of the shading, leaving white gaps not too long for the eye to carry past, are also in character with this tree. The little section in the upper right-hand corner of the plate will show what I mean.

Be sure to keep the trunks properly slender and tapering delicately all the way to the top. The branches usually tend to curve up from the main stem, particularly near the top of the tree where they are shorter. Lower down they may tend to be more horizontal or to bend down if they have had to carry heavy foliage during the tree's life. Ice storms often permanently change their curvature.

I cannot emphasize too much the importance of the silhouette of foliage masses in conveying the character of a tree. Whether you are conscious of it or not as you look at a specimen you are getting an important part of your impression from the way the edges are broken up against the sky or against other trees or buildings. Try therefore to discern as well as you can what the identifying marks are and give particular care to putting them down in your sketch.

LESSON 7 — STRUCTURE AND FOLIAGE OF BIRCH TREES

LESSON 8—DRAWING THE ELM TREE

One of the loveliest of our American trees is the elm. Despite the ravages of diseases and parasites and destructive storms, this graceful tree is still found in great numbers distributed through the greater part of this country.

In general form, the skeleton of the elm might be approximately contained within a narrow inverted cone, at least until it nears the top of the tree. Here, its limbs curve out gracefully and continue into the smaller branches which bend down under the weight of the leafage.

The trunk of the elm is substantial. Its lower portion thickens at the base and merges into roots extending downward like great fingers designed to achieve a firm grasp of the soil. Its upper part divides as it begins to spread outward, at a height of perhaps ten to twenty feet above the ground, into continuously tapering limbs. A section through the trunk of the mature tree is commonly not circular but shows bulges which indicate the beginnings of the limbs. These bulges become more pronounced as the point of division is approached, so that they develop naturally into the separate limbs above.

The crown of the tree tends to take the form of an arch, or rather a dome, which is filled out more or less according as the tree has a full, healthy growth or is thinly developed for lack of nourishment or otherwise.

The little sketch in the upper left of the accompanying plate indicates the general envelope of the tree I have taken as my example. This has been more fully developed into the skeleton and foliage masses as seen at the upper right. As with the other trees we have studied, we begin our sketch thus by establishing its essentials.

In the sketch fully developed on the plate, it will be noted that I have used both types of stroke in modeling the trunk, limbs, and branches. Some of the strokes are curved to suggest the form of the limbs and define the shadows falling across them. As in the preceding lessons, where the limbs or branches occur against a background of foliage, they are left white. Where they are seen against the sky they are dark in shadow, gray in light.

In expressing the foliage, short, broad strokes, slightly curving and following the general direction of the arching sweep of the tree's crown, are applied with values already decided upon in accordance with the way the light falls. The portions of the foliage receiving most intense light may be completely highlighted, suggested only by a few strokes around their edges or by silhouetting them against darker masses. Portions receiving normal light will be shown by various degrees of gray. Keep plenty of variety in these gray areas and allow bits of white to show through here and there. Watch the silhouettes of the edges of each group of leaves so that they will be suggestive of the way the leaves hang down. It may be well at this point to turn back and compare this tree with the oak shown in Lesson 6. You can see by comparing the two plates, better than I can tell you in words, the difference in character of the strokes used. While the individual strokes do not stand out too prominently, they count enough to give direction to the leaf arrangement and differentiate one type of tree from the other so far as that feature is concerned.

One of the things you must always have in mind, just as in drawing other subjects, is the matter of proper proportioning. The weight of the trunk and limbs of each kind of tree bears a characteristic relationship to the whole tree. I mention this because I often encounter drawings of elm trees where the trunks are too thin in proportion to the rest. Note the apparent swelling in the size of the trunk where it merges into the limbs and also the merging of the trunk into the principal roots at the point of contact with the ground. When you once see these things you will never thereafter be guilty of drawing elms that seem to have smooth cylindrical trunks, resting on the ground like up-ended pipes and branching abruptly into smaller pipes.

Now please do not immediately undertake to prove me wrong by bringing up examples of elm trees which do not conform to the general statements I have made. There are exceptions in nature to almost every rule, but what we are trying to do here is to learn how to draw trees which satisfy the artistic eye yet are natural.

LESSON 8—STRUCTURE AND FOLIAGE OF ELM TREES

LESSON 6—DRAWING THE OAK TREE

In discussing the correct drawing of trees, I wish to make it clear that my interest in distinguishing between species is not that of a scientific botanist, nor do I pretend to any botanical exactitude in my drawings. I regard the trees I draw from the point of view of an artist who wishes to be convincingly truthful and who loves trees for the sake of their interesting forms, the rhythmic lines of their structural elements, and the play of light and shade and color through their foliage masses.

The oak, which is the subject of this lesson, offers marked contrast to the pine, which was treated in the last plate. Characterized by great strength of structure, its heavy trunk and gnarled twisting limbs support a broad, heavily-leafed crown. I have chosen to illustrate here a rather symmetrical example—one whose spreading branches extend about as far horizontally as the tree reaches vertically. The general shape of the whole might be roughly contained within a great sphere and if you keep this thought in mind you will feel the form as you render it.

As usual we begin by drawing lightly the structure of the tree, its thick sturdy trunk tapering up from the ground, dividing itself into several principal limbs which throw off heavy branches as they ascend with many undulations towards the top, reducing gradually their diameters until they divide into smaller branches and twigs which carry the leaves. From the main limbs extend occasional turnings, twisting minor limbs, struggling their way towards the enclosing periphery, crossing and recrossing each other as they go and casting their shadows on their neighbors. We also sketch in the foliage masses and suggest lightly the shades and shadows preparatory to their final expression with broad strokes. The light in this case is falling from the left, above and behind the observer. Keeping in mind the ball-like general mass, you will be able to determine where the lighter and darker portions will occur and cast the foliage shadows on branch, trunk, and ground. When you have drawn your tree something like the little diagram at the top of the plate, only much lighter, you will be ready to go ahead, with essentials established.

Start with the darkest areas, putting them in with broad strokes, rather short to suggest leafage and remembering to silhouette the edges of each mass sharply against the sky with appropriately irregular profile. Heavy limbs in shadow may be shown by strokes running either lengthwise or crosswise. The short strokes running crosswise give a slight vibration to the profiles of the limbs, which is in accord with the roughness of the bark and at the same time helps to suggest the play of reflected light. Longitudinal strokes may be used for the smaller branches and for limbs which catch the light on one side. Remember that limbs and branches passing in front of dark areas should be left white where they catch the light or gray where you want them to show up in shadow. Against the light sky they should show up as clean dark strokes, their values varying with light conditions. It is these many contrasts which give the sparkle to your drawing and fill it with life.

As you render the foliage masses, have in mind the way the leaves radiate from the twigs and branches. While you do not draw in each leaf, your individual strokes will suggest their directions, particularly around the edges. Try as you draw to feel the form of each mass and to model it with variations of tone while keeping its general value in proper key with the whole.

Observe how, on the darker side of the trunk and principal limbs and even in the darkest foliage masses, I have taken into account the reflected light from the ground which helps to express form and adds interest. Your skill in maintaining variety of surface in every part of your sketch while keeping it all in proper relation to the whole will develop with practice, just as mine did. Do not be content with just one or a few trials. Make many. Go outdoors and draw from nature. Compose some trees of your own. Do not forget throughout all this that the proper and frequent sharpening of the pencil is a fundamental preliminary to this particular technique. Success depends upon the clean-cut and precise application of pencil to paper with each stroke calculated to be of maximum expressiveness. An uncontrollable point won't work.

LESSON 6—STRUCTURE AND FOLIAGE OF OAK TREES

LESSON 5—DRAWING THE PINE TREE

For the next few lessons I am going to discuss the drawing of different types of trees. Many people who can make a satisfactory representation of an architectural subject seem satisfied if they can suggest its setting by means of nondescript or stereotyped trees and shrubbery. I feel very strongly that it is worth while to learn to draw trees that really look like trees and that can be identified as oak or birch or pine or some other definite species.

The first essential is an understanding of the tree structure. You should, by observation of actual specimens, fix in your mind the characteristics of each kind of tree, the relation between its various parts, between trunk and branch, twig and leaf, and so on. Realize that it is a three-dimensional object which can be thought of in terms of plan as well as elevation. Light falling upon it will strike full against some of the foliage masses while others will be in shade or in shadow. Some of the branches extend towards the observer, some away, and some to either side of the trunk. These things seem elementary, but I have seen so many drawings which show a disregard for the simplest facts of tree structure that it is worth while to point them out. By keeping them in mind you will avoid drawing the hard, formless silhouettes or feather-dustery monstrosities that so unnecessarily mar the work of many amateur sketchers.

At 1, 2, and 3 on the accompanying plate, I have diagrammatically shown a section of weather-beaten pine tree with four branches. In plan, the branches, each bearing an irregular mass of needles, radiate in four directions from the trunk, filling out a rough circle. In elevation, the four branches appear at different levels, extending out and down from the trunk and terminating in up-curving, finger-like twigs supporting the foliage. With light falling from the left and above and striking the tops of these foliage masses, the sides you are looking at would be about as shown, generally dark in value with a suggestion of sunlight along the top surfaces. Where the foliage is in back of the trunk, the trunk will appear light against the dark needles beyond. Where the branch comes out towards the light, its foliage casts a shadow on the trunk below. So much for this analysis, the application of which will become clear as you proceed with a finished sketch, either a copy of this plate or composed according to fancy.

In young pines the branches start from the trunk at an upward angle. As the tree grows older and the foliage masses become heavier and extend farther out from the trunk, the branches are weighted down into a graceful, elongated S-curve. At first there are possibly six or more radiating branches at each level. In the tree's life, however, branches break off or are cut off until when it becomes old it is likely to be irregular and picturesque like the ones shown here. One can take liberties in arranging the foliage of this sort of trees to conform with the requirements of a picture, without much danger of departing from reality, provided the general rules of structure are not violated.

In rendering the foliage of these trees, I have used short broad strokes for the most part, with narrower radiating strokes, made with the narrower side of the broad-pointed pencil, around the edges of each mass. This treatment makes a clean, sharp silhouette against the sky, which is left white, and suggests, without being too literal, the needles which make up the foliage.

While the general tone of evergreen foliage is dark, you will note that I have made the portions receiving the light from the sky distinctly lighter than those portions in shade, away from the light, or in shadow. You will also observe, in some places, allowance for light reflected up from the ground into the shaded areas.

The branches and twigs either silhouette dark against the sky or light against dark foliage behind them. Since the bark is comparatively smooth, it may be rendered with broad strokes laid with a little texture. Where, for purposes of composition, a light area of foliage needs to be suggested, as in the branches vignetting at the upper right of our little picture, it is convincing enough to put in the radiating zig-zag strokes around the edges. The eye is satisfied because the more completely rendered masses of the other trees have told the story by suggestion.

LESSON 5—STRUCTURE AND FOLIAGE OF PINE TREES

VIEW TOWARD GAVERNIE, PYRENEES